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Talk of the Tapes

By Dorothy McCardle

Sen. Sam J. Ervin Jr. (D-N.C.), chairman of the Senate Watergate Select Committee, used to be a mystery story addict—but not any more.

"Now, all my time is taken up reading about Watergate," said Ervin Friday night at the cocktail buffet given by Gen. and Mrs. Godfrey McHugh at their home on Partridge Lane in Northwest.

Sen. Ervin said he had only read one segment of the transcript of the Watergate tapes released by President Nixon.

"I have only read the part which deals with the conversations of March 21," he said."I have no comment on the transcripts because I may have to act as a member of the jury if the case ever reaches the Senate."

His wife said he is now in great demand as a speaker at colleges.

"At one college I never mentioned the name of President Nixon," he said. "Later when I was asked a question about the President, I pulled out a copy of the Constitution and read excerpts from that. I still never mentioned the President."

It seemed that Ervin has copy of the Constitution handy at all times.

Liz Carpenter, who was press secretary to Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson at the White House, had something to say about Sam Ervin on the college circuit.

"Sen. Ervin has wiped out the generation gap," said Mrs. Carpenter. "He has made it possible for older candidates to run and be on camera."

The senator said that the only person who is happy about his decision not to run for another Senate term is his wife. "Other people seem to want me to run so they can either vote for me or against me," he said and smiled at his wife who was standing nearby.

Mrs. Barry Goldwater was there without her husband, Sen. Goldwater (R-Ariz.;, who flew to Phoenix Friday with President Nixon for a GOP rally.

Like almost everybody at the party, Mrs. Goldwater says she has been reading the Nixon tape/transcripts about Watergate.

Frank Ikard, president of the American Petroleum Institute, looked at the McHugh's swimming pool in their handsome rear garden and seemed to be reminded of the recent energy crisis.

"We'll have another crisis soon if people don't stop being so extravgant with gas and oil," Ikard predicted.

Godfrey McHugh, now retired from the Air Force, served as Air Force aide to former Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson.